

Cambridge First Certificate (FCE) Writing Part Two- Classify and rank the formal and informal email and letter phrases

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

| Very formal | Medium formality | Very informal/ casual/ friendly |
|---|--|---|
| Dear Mr/ Ms + family name | Dear + first name | Hi + first name + ! |
| I apologise for the delay in replying to your email. | I'm sorry for my late reply. | Sorry for taking so long to get back to you. |
| Thank you for your email yesterday regarding... | Thanks for your email about... | I was so thrilled to get your mail about... |
| I am writing to you in connection with... | I'm writing to you about... | Writing about... |
| I hope this email finds you well. | How are you? | How's it going?/ How are things?/ How's life? |
| Could you possibly give me some information about...? | I'd like to know... | You don't know..., do you? |
| In answer to your second question,... | You also asked me about... | ...and about..., I'd say... |
| May I suggest...?/ I'd probably advise... | Have you thought about...? It's well worth it. | Whatever you do, don't miss.../ You really must... |
| Please find... attached. | I've attached... | Here's... |
| I'm available for... at any time. | I'm free for... any time. | Just tell me when you want to... and I'll be there! |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Unfortunately,...did not meet the standards that I expected. | ... was not really good enough. | ... was totally unacceptable. |
| I look forward to hearing from you. | I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon. | Write soon!/ Keep in touch. |
| I hope we have the opportunity to meet again soon. | I hope we have the chance to meet again soon. | Can't wait to see you again! |
| If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. | If you have any more questions, please contact me. | If you need any more info, just drop me a line. |
| Yours sincerely/ Sincerely yours | Best regards | Hugs and kisses/ Lots of love |

Put the cards that you are given into categories by function (= what the language is meant to do), then rank the words in each category by formality from most formal on the left to least formal on the right.

Check your answers with the worksheets above.

What are the general differences between formal and informal emailing phrases? Decide if each thing below is a characteristic of formal emails (F) or informal emails (I):

- Avoid contractions (= using “I am” instead of “I’m”, etc)
- Emoticons such as smileys
- Exclamation marks and multiple punctuation (e.g. !!!!)
- Grammar (e.g. word order) unlike normal speech
- Just first names
- Longer words and longer sentences
- No subject or no subject and no auxiliary verb
- Phrasal verbs like “get + back + to + me”
- Idioms made from short words like “keep + in + touch”
- Idiomatic language or slang
- Similar to speech
- Short forms (btw etc)
- Very polite language such as “Would you mind...?”

Without looking above, put expressions into the gaps on the next page.

Look above, checking any phrases you put which are not in that list.

Why are these kinds of informal language not acceptable in FCE? - XOXO, CU, See ya, Wassup?, gonna, wanna

Without looking above, put expressions with the same function into the gaps below.

| Very formal | Medium formality | Very informal/ casual/ friendly |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Dear + first name | |
| | I'm sorry for my late reply. | |
| | Thanks for your email about... | |
| | I'm writing to you about... | |
| | How are you? | |
| | I'd like to know... | |
| | | ...and about..., I'd say... |
| May I suggest...?/ I'd probably advise... | | |
| | I've attached... | |
| | I'm free for... any time. | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | ... was not really good enough. | |
| I look forward to hearing from you. | | |
| | I hope we have the chance to meet again soon. | |
| If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. | | |
| | Best regards | |